The Southern PATRIOT

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Atlanta Conference Calls For End To Discrimination and Segregation in Higher Education

A resolution calling for an end to segregation and all other forms of discrimination in higher education was adopted unanimously by about 250 professors and students attending the First Southwide Conference on Discrimination in Higher Education at Atlanta University on April 8.

The resolution endorsed the principle of non-segregated regional as well as local and national planning, but condemned the Southern Governors' regional school plan "as long as it extends or perpetuates segregation."

The strengthening of existing institutions that Negroes and other minorities presently attend was called for, also the opening of the doors of these institutions to all qualified students.

"Democracy in higher education means, also," the conference declared, "the employment of teachers and the appointment of members to the boards of control without regard to color or creed."

"We call upon all citizens," the resolution stated — "particularly students, faculties, and boards of control — to work for the removal of all barriers to equality of educational opportunity. Segregation laws must be repealed. Court decisions will continue to be of decisive influence. But it is hoped that the educational institutions themselves, many of which were founded upon religious faith and high moral principles, will take the lead in bringing about fair play and a truly democratic culture."

Sponsors of the historic Atlanta conference were 225 teachers in 116 colleges and universities in all of the 17 states and the District of Columbia where separate schools are maintained by law. (See Mar. S.P. for sponsors list)

Dr. Ludd M. Spivey, president of Florida Southern College at Lakeland, Florida, served as chairman of the conference. Coordinator of the meeting was the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc.

Keynote speaker for the conference was Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, Professor of Sociology at Howard University, and president in 1948-49 of the American Sociological Society.

The morning panel of the one-day assembly, with President Benjamin E. Mays, of Morehouse College, presiding, discussed "The Present Situation and Recent Gains." Speakers and panel members were: Dr. James M. Nabrit, Jr., Professor of Law and secretary of Howard University; Mr. John T. Kenna, Kentucky Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews; Dr. L. D. Reddick, Library Director of Atlanta University; Miss Della Ryan, Social Worker, U. S. Indian Service; and Dr. Herman H. Long, Director of Race Relations Department, American Missionary Association.

Reports were heard from Kentucky by President Rufus B. Atwood of Kentucky State College; Mr. George Penty of the Equal Education Committee, University of Florida; Mr. Malcolm Smith Whitby and Mr. James Delaplain of the University of Oklahoma; and others.

The luncheon conference on "The

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CONFERENCE GROUP in front of the Trevor Arnett Library Atlanta University, where conference sessions were held. About half of the delegates were still inside involved in discussion when this picture was made.

Message to the Conference

By PROFESSOR ALBERT EINSTEIN

If an individual commits an injustice he is harassed by his conscience. But nobody is apt to feel responsible for misdeeds of a community, in particular, if they are supported by old traditions. Such is the case with discrimination. Every right-minded person will be grateful to you for having united to fight this evil that so grievously injures the dignity and the repute of our country. Only by spreading education among all of our people can we approach the ideals of democracy.

Your fight is not easy, but in the end, you will succeed.

Atlanta Conference

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regional school plan" had President Rufus B. Atwood, of Kentucky State College, as chairman, and the following as speakers and panel members: President Hollis Price, LeMoyne College; Dean S. M. Nabrit, Atlanta University; President F. D. Patterson of Tuskegee Institute; Mr. Aubrey Williams, President of the Southern Conference Educational Fund; President A. D. Beittel of Talladega College; Miss Irene Harris, student religious worker of Atlanta; and Dr. Louis C. Kesselman, Assistant Professor of Political Science of the University of Louisville.

Presiding at the afternoon panel was Dr. Lambert Molyneaux, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia. Speakers and panel members were Dean James L. Hupp of West Virginia Wesleyan College; Dr. James M. Nabrit, Jr. of Howard University; Mr. Lyle Saunders, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of New Mexico; Miss Martha G. Boswell, Assistant Professor of English, College of the Ozarks; Miss Rosalie Oakes, student religious worker, Atlanta; Dr. Walter R. Chivers, Chairman, Department of Sociology, Morehouse College; and Miss Flola L. Shephard, Secretary, The Faculty and Board of Fellows, Black Mountain College.

The Rev. William Holmes Borders, Pastor of the Wheat Street Baptist Church, Atlanta, gave the invocation.

Chairman of the Atlanta committee on arrangements was Dr. L. D. Reddick, Library Director of Atlanta University. The library staff prepared a graphic exhibit on Jim Crow Education which occupied all of the display cases in the Trevor Arnett Library where the conference sessions were held.

The resolutions committee was comprised of Dean James L. Hupp, chairman; Dr. L. D. Reddick, Miss Martha Boswell, Dr. James M. Nabrit, Jr., and Dr. Paul E. Bryan, Professor of Law at Emory University.

The brief excerpts on this page from Dr. Frazier's brilliant address and the short notes of the panel addresses on other pages of course do not do justice to the originals. The full text of most of the addresses will appear in the printed proceedings of the conference.

The Crisis in the Education of the Negro

Excerpts from the Keynote Address By Dr. E. Franklin Frazier

There is a crisis in the education of the Negro today because what has come to be known as Negro education can no longer provide the Negro with the intellectual horizon or the "area of orientation" required by the world in which he must live.

* * *

Negro education has never been taken seriously as a form of intellectual discipline or as a part of the stream of intellectual life of the country. Moreover, as long as there is a system of segregated education for Negroes, they will suffer from mental isolation which will not permit them to achieve their maximum intellectual development. Freedom and communication are the very essence of the intellectual life. Negroes who have accomplishd anything intellectually have escaped from the intellectual isolation of Negro education into the free and unrestricted intellectual atmosphere of northern universities. Segregated Negro institutions of higher education are bound to be second or third rate institutions.

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One might ask, how is it possible to have a system of university education based upon racial exclusiveness. The answer to this question is obviously that the very idea of a university precludes all types of exclusiveness based upon race, caste, or class. Not only in western civilization, but throughout the world, scholarship and learning have broken down the barriers of race and the station in which one is born. Even the European colonial powers have made no distinctions where the question of science and scholarship was concerned. More specifically, neither England nor France ever instituted anything resembling what has come to be known as Negro education. A Negro was a doctor or engineer or what have you, but never a Negro doctor or a Negro engineer. These are the peculiar products of that American invention known as "Negro education."

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Whatever the Supreme Court of the United States may decide in the Sweatt Case, sooner or later the highest court of the land must either rule against the separate school system as a violation of democratic principles or repudiate the basic ideal of our American society. The attempt to set up a so-called regional school is obviously an attempt to circumvent the ruling of the Court requiring the States to provide equal educational facilities for all of its citizens. If the States are required to provide equal educational facilities for Negroes, then one of the chief motivations for a segregated system of education will be removed.

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Here it should also be pointed out that the United Negro College Fund which raises annually a mere pittance of one and a third million dollars for thirty or so Negro colleges offers no solution of the problem of higher education of Negroes. The suddent interest of certain white people in this futile gesture should convince anyone that their support is based upon pure sentimentality or, at worst, a calculated design to maintain segregated education.

* * *

It is apparent that the South is not unanimous in supporting segregated education. This has been shown beyond a doubt by a number of polls among students. The most important poll of the present state of opinion is that conducted by the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Incorporated, which revealed that 70 per cent of the southern college teachers who replied to the questionnaire favored the immediate admission of Negro students without segregation to graduate and professional schools. Evidently the so-called liberals who pretend to speak for the South, (but who are unwilling to attack segregated education), do not express the growing liberal opinion; they are more likely endeavoring to forge public opinion according to their own prejudice concerning what they regard as the Negro's proper place in the South.

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This is all indicative of the growing feeling on the part of the American people that the United States cannot remain the protagonist of democracy and enlightment and at the same time maintain a system of racial segregation.

The Present Situation and Recent Gains

Summary of the Addresses at the Morning Panel*

THE NEGRO
By DR. JAMES M. NABRIT, JR.

In the field of higher education, there is not a single first class graduate school for Negroes from Maryland to Florida and from Texas to Missouri. There is some doubt as to whether there is a single first class undergraduate school. Poor elementary schools, poor secondary schools, poorly paid teachers, economically impoverished families do not furnish the material for first class segregated schools. On the segregated side then, the situation is bad.

Under the Gaines decision we had a rash of Negro graduate schools breaking out in the South. Under the Murray and Sipuel cases we had law schools springing up. Under the threat of the Sweatt and McLaurin cases, we have regionalism promoted. These have been generally belated efforts to improve higher education among Negroes on a segregated basis in an effort to keep the Negro from the white universities in the South.

Some areas have reacted differently under this pressure. Delaware has opened the University to Negroes where courses are not available at the Negro school—so has West Virginia—Arkansas admitted a Negro to the Law school in the basement on a segregated basis but has now removed all segregation and has admitted a Negro girl to the Medical school on a non-segregated basis. Kentucky lost a suit to keep Johnson out of the graduate school and has opened its doors to Negroes. You are familiar with what the Catholics have done in St. Louis, but may not know that in Washington, D. C., all colleges admit Negroes except George Washington. Texas has a Negro in the Medical School in Galveston; Notre Dame has admitted Negroes; Negroes are in most universities in the rest of the United States and many of them are stars on the teams while others are members of the faculties. These are gains.

In looking ahead I am not too sure that we shall be able for a long time to reap the real benefits of our recent gains, for the competition will be keen and the Negro will be a product of a poor secondary system. Until segregation is ended then the situation will fluctuate between bad and not so bad. It cannot be good. Admission into white universities in the South is not enough. The system of segregation must be ended.

ANTI-SEMITISM & RELIGIOUS MINORITIES
By JOHN T. KENNA

The subject of Anti-Semitism and discrimination against religious minorities was discussed by Mr. John T. Kenna. He reported relatively little discrimination in the South in this area, as compared to the rest of the United States. The problem, however, is more severe than is generally recognized. It is futile, said Mr. Kenna, to consider the problem of discrimination against Jews and Catholics apart from the larger and more serious problem of discrimination against Negroes. There can be no true brotherhood, he asserted, no genuine democracy, until the blight of racial and religious discrimination is removed.

THE AMERICAN INDIAN
By DELLA RYAN

Miss Della Ryan was not able to attend the Conference but sent her discussion of the subject as it pertains to the Indian. The status of Indians in the United States, Miss Ryan stated, varies greatly in every aspect, including higher education.

"Perhaps," said Miss Ryan, "one should not even use the term 'recent gains' as applicable to Oklahoma Indians seeking higher education because there has never been discrimination toward them on account of race or color."

The gains which are important are that it is only since 1934 that Indian youth have been afforded opportunity to solve the problem of how to finance a college education. The Wheeler-Howard Act made it possible for boys and girls to borrow money from the Federal government with which to defray their college expenses. With this financial assistance and with the personal guidance offered through Indian Service workers and tribal leaders, the number of Indian youth going to colleges and universities has been increasing year by year.

LIBRARY SERVICES
By DR. L. D. REDDICK

There are those of us who believe that the library is—or at least should be — the center of most college and graduate education and that it is one of the most revealing indexes of the study and research that actually occur on the campus.

The white college and university libraries of the Southeast have a total of approximately 11,000,000 volumes while the Negro colleges of the same area have somewhat less than 1,000,000 (Harvard University alone has five times as many books as all of the Negro colleges of the Southeast combined).

The average annual library book-budget of the Negro college in the Southeast roughly amounts to $15,000 while that of the white college amounts to $200,000. (Yale's annual library budget is $400,000). Similar inequities exist all along the line whether the unit used for comparison is personnel, salaries or the capital outlay for buildings and basic equipment.

Bad as these brute facts are, the efforts—real and pretended—that have been made to correct the situation are even more discouraging. The historical fact is that during the past two decades, aside from the periodic review and deploring of the situation, not much tangible improvement can be recorded.

DR. JAMES M. NABRIT, JR. addressing the assembly on "The Present Situation and Recent Gains." Left to right: Dr. Reddick, Dr. Frazier, Dr. Nabrit, President Mays, Dr. Long, Mr. Kenna, President Spivey. (Pictures on the wall are part of the 9th annual exhibit of paintings and sculpture by Negro artists sponsored by Atlanta University).

*Mr. Gus C. Garcia of San Antonio, Texas, was to have made the report on Spanish-Americans, but illness prevented his attendance.